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REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending in the above application. Claims 3, 7-11 and 20 have been withdrawn from further consideration as being directed towards a non-elected invention. Of the remaining claims, claims 4 and 12 have been amended and claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 15-17 have been cancelled. Thus, as presently amended, claims 4, 12-14, 18 and 19 are presented for further consideration. Claim 4 is the only remaining independent claim from which all other claims depend. Claim 4 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by Welschhof, U.S. Patent No. 5,026,325 or Merwin, U.S. Patent No. 2,562,729. Claim 4 also stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being obvious in view of Anderson, U.S. Patent No. 4,705,491 in view of Jacob, U.S. Patent No. 6,217,456.

With regard to the drawing objections set forth in paragraph 4 of the Office Action, the subject matter of claims 5 and 16 has been cancelled and thus, no drawing amendments are required in view of these claims. The cross-hatching pattern used for elements 32, 33, 34, 41 and 42 has been corrected. The two (2) substitute drawing sheets containing Figures 1-4 have been amended to reflect that all of these elements are elastic materials such as plastics. The term "elastic," however, also encompasses most metals and these parts could, indeed, also comprise elastic metals. The specification has been amended to correct the typographical errors noted at paragraph 4c regarding reference character 31. No new matter has been added.

With regard to the specification objections set forth at paragraph 6 of the Office Action, the subject matter of claim 1, line 13 and claim 4, line 16 ("free from circumferential forces") finds support in the specification as originally filed at paragraph [0005], lines 8-9. Nevertheless, the detailed description at paragraph [0026] has been amended to include similar language. The subject matter of claims 13 and 14 likewise finds support in paragraph [0005] of the specification as originally filed, but similar language has been added to the detailed description at paragraph [0026] for purposes of clarity. Paragraph [0030] has also been amended to contain language

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commensurate in scope with the subject matter of claim 19. Applicant submits that none of these specification amendments raise new matter issues.

Claim 12 has been amended to correct a typographical error.

The claim rejections will all be discussed with reference to claim 4, the only independent claim from which all other claims depend. Claim 4, as amended, requires at least a plurality of rolling members which are balls arranged between the pairs of first and second ball grooves and which roll on the inner cylindrical face (16) of the profiled sleeve and on the outer cylindrical face (26) of the profiled journal. This claimed feature provides one of the primary advantages of the invention in that it prevents undesired cage movements without requiring design changes to the profiled sleeve or the profiled journal. That is, only the cage member, which is typically made of plastic, requires any modification to accommodate the additional rolling members in the form of balls (32). None of the prior art references relied upon in the Office Action disclose or suggest this claimed feature of Applicant's invention. Applicant therefore requests that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102 and §103 be withdrawn.

Specifically, Applicant's claimed feature of providing rolling members in the form of balls arranged between the first and second ball grooves and rolling on in the inner cylindrical face of the profiled sleeve and the outer cylindrical face of the profiled journal is not disclosed or suggested in the Welschhof reference. Indeed, the Welschhof reference does not disclose a simple longitudinal displacement unit, but rather a plunging joint unit which is provided with additional control elements for the ball cage. These additional control elements not only stop the ball cage but limit movement of the ball cage to only half of the relative plunging movements and articulating movements between the sleeve (outer joint member) and the journal (inner joint member). Additional, non-cylindrical grooves must be cut in the sleeve and the journal to accommodate the control members in the Welschhof device. For at least these reasons, claim 4, as amended, is novel and non-obvious in view of Welschhof.

The present claims are also novel and non-obvious in view of the Merwin reference, as Merwin fails to disclose or suggest Applicant's claimed feature of the rolling members being held in the ball cage such that they are radially pre-tensioned

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between the profiled sleeve and the profiled journal. In this way, the rolling members provide drag against axial movement of the ball cage. The Merwin reference teaches the exact opposite feature. Specifically, Merwin discloses a driving mechanism having torque-transmitting balls (28) held in grooves (30, 31) between a driving shaft and elements driven thereby. In addition to the torque-transmitting balls (28), Merwin provides ball members (25) to "maintain the element (10) positively connected to the shaft (11) to be driven thereby, yet free of a frictional drag...". (Col. 2, lines 31-36). Thus, the additional ball members (25) in the Merwin device serve to keep the device frictionless against drag which is the exact opposite objective of Applicant's claimed feature to provide rolling members which are radially pretensioned between the profiled sleeve and the profiled journal to provide drag against axial movement. For at least this reason, Applicant traverses the suggestion in the Office Action that Applicant's claimed radially pretensioned feature is inherently shown in either Merwin or Matsubara, U.S. Patent No. 5,236,264. Matsubara discloses only a linear bearing having no means whatsoever for the transfer of torque by way of torque-transmitting balls engaging pairs of first and second ball grooves. Like the Merwin reference, the groups of balls shown in the Matsubara reference are meant to reduce friction with respect to relative movements of the bearing rather than increase any drag against relative axial movement between the sleeve member and the journal member as in the present invention.

With regard to the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103, Applicant submits that all of the present claims are novel and non-obvious in view of Anderson and Jacob for at least the same reasons as set forth above with regard to Welschhof. That is, the combination of references fails to disclose or suggest Applicant's claimed feature wherein the rolling members are balls arranged between the pairs of first and second ball grooves and roll on an inner cylindrical face of the profiled sleeve and an outer cylindrical face of the profiled journal. The Anderson reference does not disclose or suggest anything like this feature of Applicant's invention. Further, Anderson does not suggest modifying the device of Anderson to include such a feature. Thus, for at least

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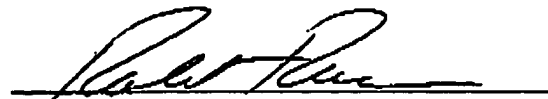
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these reasons, Applicant requests that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103 be withdrawn.

Having overcome all of the objections and rejections set forth in the Office Action, the Applicant submits that claims 4, 12-14, and 18-19 are allowable. A Notice of Allowance indicating the same is therefore earnestly solicited. The Examiner is invited to telephone the Applicants' undersigned attorney at (248) 223-9500 if any unresolved matters remain.

Respectfully Submitted,

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